

REMARKS

This response is supplemental to the response filed on May 10, 2004. This supplemental response is being filed in order to amend claim 13 to further clarify the subject matter therein and to reiterate comments made in the previous response. Claim 13 has been amended to recite that the recycle from the deasphalting oil thermal cracker and the recycle from the light vacuum fractions thermal cracker are fed only to the inlet of the atmospheric fractionating tower. The amendments to claim 13 bring the scope of the method claims further in line with the scope of the apparatus claims. Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter within the meaning of 35 USC 132 is added by the amendments made herein, as well as the amendments made in the previously filed response.

In addition, Applicant reiterates the reasons for patentability . In particular, Applicant reiterates that the present claims are patentable over the prior art of record because the presently claimed apparatus and method permits the production of end products with substantially no asphaltenes by recycling the cracked products from the deasphalting oil thermal cracker, as well as the cracked products from the light vacuum fractions thermal cracker, to only the inlet of the atmospheric fractionating tower. Applicant submits that the prior art references fail to render

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these claims obvious since the references do not teach this aspect of the claimed subject matter.

Further, Applicant submits that van Dongen et al. and Kwant et al. have opposing teachings. van Dongen et al. teach that the oil is recycled from the thermal cracking unit to an inlet of the atmospheric fractionating tower by way of additional apparatus, whereas Kwant et al. teach a process by which the thermally cracked product is recycled directly to the inlet of a first atmospheric distillation zone. Given that van Dongen et al. have a number of pieces of apparatus interposed between the thermal cracking and the atmospheric distillation column, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be led to replace the apparatus of van Dongen et al. with the apparatus of Kwant et al.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, as well as for the reasons put forth in the previously-filed response, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the all pending rejections, and to allow all of the claims pending in this application.

If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding this matter, he is welcomed to contact the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number and address.

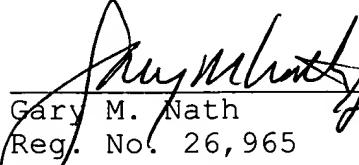
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Respectfully submitted,

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Date:

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